

December 4, 2014

An update on the SLO process at Foothill

The Academic Senate is currently engaging in robust dialogue about the SLO processes and future direction. As a part of those conversations, the senate has requested that the Office of Instruction provide a reminder of the status quo.

Two years ago, Foothill transitioned from having two college-wide SLO Coordinators to divisional SLO coordinators. The divisional coordinators are paid a quarterly stipend to work with their divisions and assist with SLO assessment. There are currently SLO coordinator vacancies in Fine Arts and PSME, and Language Arts' coordinator is teaching in London this fall but will return in Winter/Spring. The SLO Coordinators for 2014-15 are:

Roseann Berg, Biological & Health Sciences
Fatima Jinnah, Counseling & Service Areas
Katherine Schaefers, Business & Social Sciences
Barbara Schewfelt, Kinesiology & Athletics

Current Campus Policies for SLOs:

- Course-level SLOs:
 - Every course that is taught at least once in an academic year must be assessed and reflected upon at least once that year.
 - Faculty can choose to assess and reflect on all of a course's SLOs every year, or they may set up a cycle to review all of the course's SLOs within a defined time on an annual basis. For example, if a course has three SLOs identified:
 - All three SLOs may be completed every year
 - SLO 1 can be completed this year, SLO 2 next year, and SLO 3 assessed in year 3. (In this example, note that during the three year cycle, all three SLOs are completed, i.e. it is not the same SLO being completed every year)
 - The deadline for entering course-level SLO assessments and reflections into TracDat is the third week of the fall quarter for the preceding year. For example, SLOs completed in the 2014-2015 academic year must be entered no later than the third week of Fall 2015. However, faculty are welcome and encouraged to complete the reflections sooner if they wish.
- Program-level SLOs for instruction, and Service Area Outcomes and Program-Level SLOs for student services, as well as administrative unit outcomes, are assessed once a year. Reflections should be entered into TracDat in the fall quarter for the previous year's outcomes.

Some good questions have come up in the senate and elsewhere:

- 1) Why are we assessing SLOs?
- 2) What cycle or timeline is mandated by the Accrediting commission?
- 3) How frequently should we assess SLOs?
- 4) How do we broaden dialogue and participation in the SLO process?
- 5) What do we want to do with the results?
- 6) How is this linked to program review?
- 7) Is TracDat friend or foe?

I encourage you all to attend the senate meetings, read the minutes, have these conversations in your department and division. The more faculty are involved in these critical discussions the better the processes will be. And, at the end of the day, our assessment and reflection on our students' learning is our best tool for increasing student success and student equity.